THE BOWL

THE YALE BOWL vs. HARVARD STADIUM

BY PETER BURNS
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The Yale Bulldogs and Harvard Crimson will face off for the 141st time on Saturday in one of America's most famous stadiums: the Yale Bowl. Built in 1914, the Yale Bowl was the largest stadium by seating capacity for its time at 70,896, before renovations reduced it by approximately 10,000.

The Elis' rivals call another historic venue their home: Harvard Stadium. Built 11 years before the Yale Bowl, the Crimson's home turf was the largest concrete stadium in the United States before Syracuse University's Archibald Stadium was built in 1907. However, it seats only 25,000 fans.

For players, the roaring crowds of the Yale Bowl feel different from the compactness of its Boston counterpart.

"The Yale Bowl is much more spread out," offensive lineman Declan Savage '26 said. In reference to Harvard Stadium, Savage noted, "it kind of looms over you. It feels like the fans are glaring down at you."

Unlike the Yale Bowl, Harvard Stadium is built above ground and seats its fans vertically. It also has only three sides — there are no stands behind the northern end zone.

Submerged and surrounded by stands, the Bowl's Class of 1954 Field is shielded from the wind.

In an email to the News, Yale football alumnus Marty Martinson '85 recalled Harvard Stadium as a "cold, windy open horseshoe."

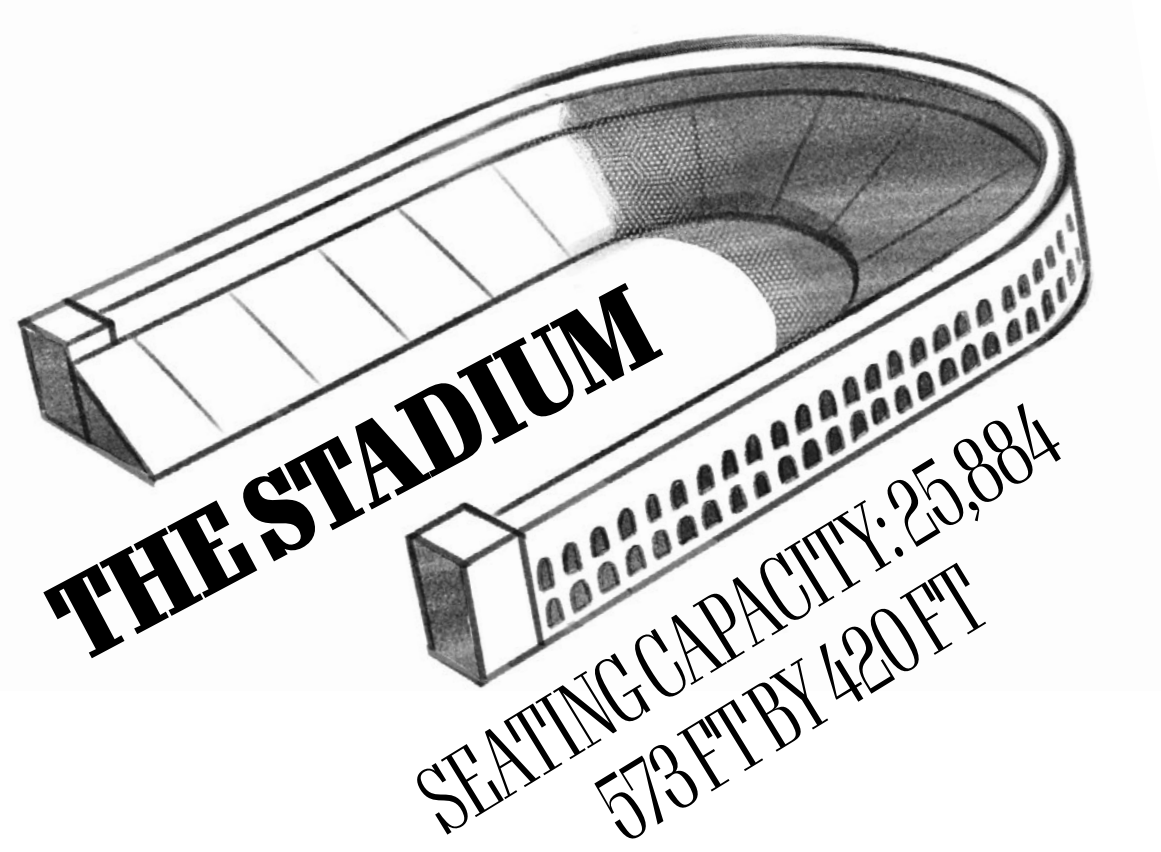
Martinson, the team captain in 1984, told the News that, because the Bowl was dug beneath ground level, kickers with whom he played felt more confident, because they were shielded from the wind.

While the difference in wind exposure could affect current Head Coach Tony Reno's playcalling, it may not be a game-changing factor.

"It does not change how we play, exactly," Charlie Humphreys '28, a member of the team, told the News. "The field is still 100 yards."

Yale kicker Noah Piper '29 has made 20 out of 21 kicks at the Yale Bowl this season.

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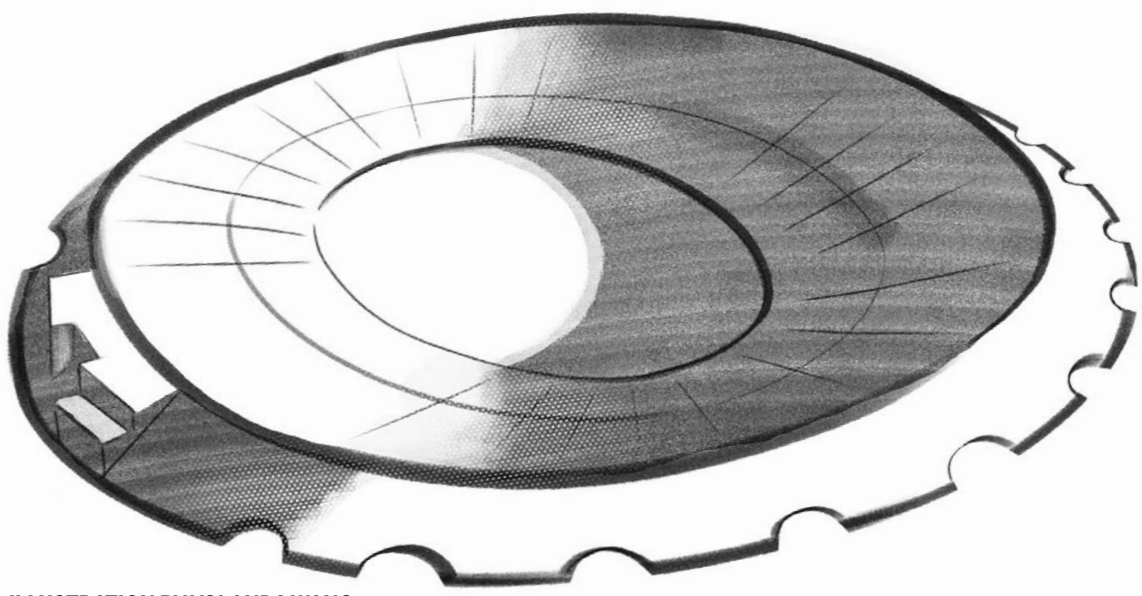


ILLUSTRATION BY YOLANDA WANG

Tailgate traditions carry Game day for parents, alumni

BY TANNER BATTLE
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

While The Game is the biggest matchup of the season for the Yale and Harvard football teams, one of the most significant aspects of this event does not take place between the end zones. Before the whistle is blown, before the ball is snapped and before the first points are scored, crowds gather outside of the stadium to partake in the age-old tradition of tailgating.

Open to those with or without tickets — alumni, undergraduates, family, friends and everyone in between — tailgating before The Game brings together people from all different backgrounds ahead of the historic rivalry match.

The Yale-Harvard game acts as a reunion each year for Yale and Harvard affiliates hailing from different states and countries. Many graduating classes host tailgates — including the class of 1992.

"We have a core group that convenes for The Game every year, home or away, and we always encourage others to join us," Andrea Martin '92 wrote to the News. "We have some classmates who have literally never missed a Game since their first year at Yale, and each year we have at least one or two who haven't been since graduation. This year we have a classmate coming all the way from Australia!"

A group of football Team 152 parents will also host a tailgate.

Maggie Yang, the mother of defensive lineman Dylan Yang '26, told the News that she would arrive by 8 a.m. or earlier to start setting up and "soaking in every second of the day."

The parents group helps to add an extra layer of support and community for parents that live far away from Yale, according to Maggie Yang. She emphasized the comfort she feels knowing that other parents are looking out for one another's children.

In New Haven, a city famous for its pizza, one tailgate has been driving in a pizza oven for 39 years in a row, cranking out anywhere from 35 to 50 pizzas each Game day.

"The oven has become its own character at this point," Mark Allara '90 wrote to the News. "It rolls in early in the morning—decked out with Blues Y's, of course—and people flock to it as soon as the first heat radiates off the stones." He added that "the whole group shares a slice as we pop the 6 liter grand cru Champagne as a sort of opening ceremony."

The commitment to this tailgate is serious. Allara wakes up at 5 a.m. on game day so that by the time people arrive at 9 a.m., there is pizza ready for them to eat.

"The oven is really just an excuse to bring people closer. Anyone can walk up, grab a slice, tell a story, and feel part of something. If the oven has done anything, it keeps my roommates, classmates and strangers a reason to smile, to connect, and to make memories we'll carry with us long after the final whistle," Allara wrote.

This Saturday, Allara's tailgate will be missing one of its founding members. For those involved, it presents the opportunity to remember and honor a man who understood the tailgate's ability to bring people together.

"In 2025, we are dedicating the tailgate to our roommate and pizza oven legend John Kennedy Bailey who died tragically in a car accident. 'JB' was amazing in his ability to discover shared experiences, friends, or love for his home state of West Virginia with anyone who showed up to the oven," Allara wrote to the News.

No matter who wins or loses in The Game, the memories, bonds and traditions built by the morning tailgates will always carry the day.

This year, tailgating outside the Yale Bowl opens at 9 a.m., three hours prior to kickoff.

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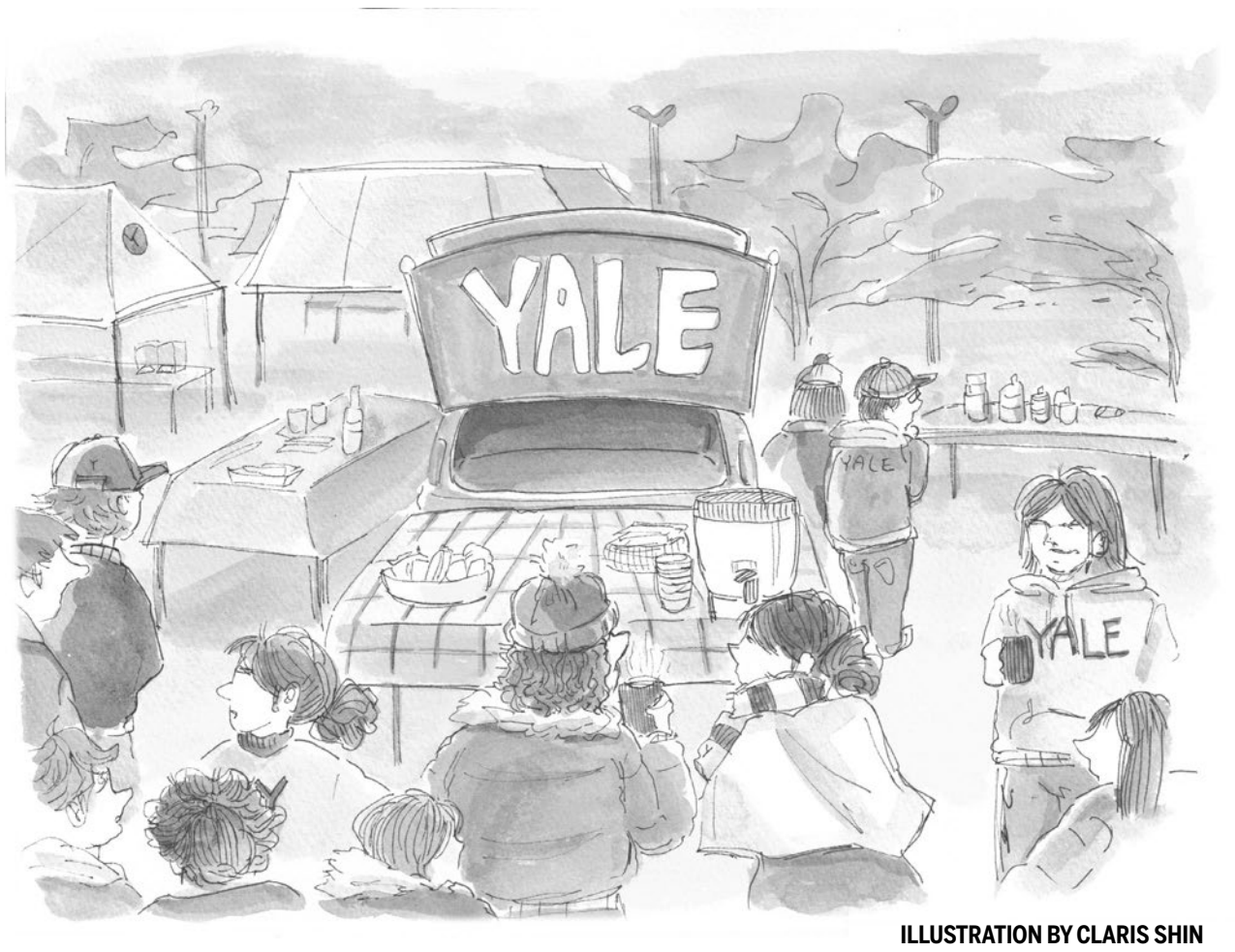


ILLUSTRATION BY CLARIS SHIN